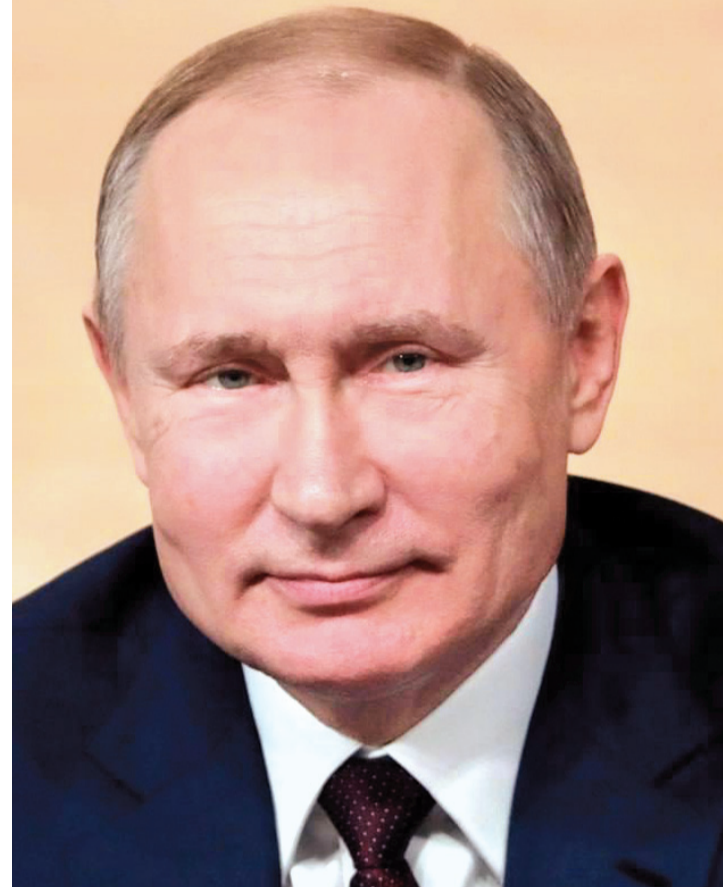




Day of Russia



MESSAGE FROM THE RUSSIAN AMBASSADOR



H.E. Vladimir Putin President of Russian Federation

On June 12, we celebrate one of the most important national holidays in our country – Russia Day. This date commemorates the beginning of its fundamental transformation through which it has proved once again its capability to overcome difficulties regardless of their nature.

On this day the Russian people rejoice over strong patriotic sentiments and respect for the Motherland, a country with a millennia-long history, unique legacy, and culture, which has united a multitude of peoples, religions and languages.

Russians around the world have been going through some critical times and severe trials. But our people are meeting all challenges with dignity and honour. June 12 symbolizes a future-oriented Russia, successful development of its economy, improvement of social security, consolidation of the friendship between the peoples of the Russian Federation, strengthening of its position on the international arena as well as reminds of great victories and accomplishments of many generations of our predecessors. The modern world is also

undergoing deep transformation. The start of the Special military operation in Ukraine was a response to the blatant ignorance by the West of security concerns of Russia, and the abandonment by the West of its commitments. It is also a response to the genocide perpetrated by the Kiev regime against civilians in Donbass, including citizens of the Russian Federation. The operation is not aimed against civilians in Ukraine. The goal is to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine, as well as bring to trial those who perpetrated numerous abominable bloody crimes. Ukraine and the Ukrainian people have been turned into an instrument of Western policy to destabilize Russia. This operation will last till all its aims, pointed by our President Vladimir Putin, are reached. Our cause is just, and we will win. No doubt.

The multipolar world means being more just and transparent. And this is one of the aims of today's struggle – struggle for the better life of our children, struggle against undermining traditional values and the entire name of family, for the better future of the whole world. Now the center of gravity of the global growth is rapidly moving towards Asia-Pacific region, including South Asia.

The Russian-Sri Lankan relations provide a good example of sincere friendship and mutual understanding that can exist between two countries. Our states have similar approaches to important foreign policy issues. Sri Lanka supports Russia's initiatives at the UN General



H.E. Levan Dzhagaryan Ambassador

Assembly, including resolutions on countering the glorification of Nazism, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, backs up our efforts to promote international information security, arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation. Russia, in its turn, has always supported Sri Lanka in all international fora, particularly in the United Nations Human Rights Council.

Political dialogue continues to develop steadily between our countries. We have launched productive interaction in the UN, its specialized agencies, and institutions, as well as other multilateral organizations, including the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, where Sri Lanka has a dialogue partner status. We welcome the Sri Lanka aspirations to join BRICS where Russia is one of the founders. And, of course, we deeply

appreciate its balanced position on the Ukrainian issue despite all the pressure and efforts to incline Sri Lanka to Western side of the conflict.

Russia and Sri Lanka are expanding trade, economic, cultural, educational, humanitarian and tourism ties. Our country remains one of the major importers of Ceylon tea. Russia continues its active cooperation with Sri Lanka in the energy field. Sri Lanka has become one of the main destinations for Russian tourists. Our citizens are on the leading positions among travelers arriving to Sri Lanka for vacations.

Russian higher education is rightfully top rated worldwide for its high quality standards. Thousands of Sri Lankan citizens have got higher education in Russia and USSR throughout the last six decades. Many graduates reached significant positions in their corresponding professional areas, became high ranking officials, prominent businessmen and top level specialists in various fields. Currently, we are working on increasing the number of state-sponsored grants for Russian higher education.

Long live friendship between Russia and Sri Lanka!

Message from the Foreign Minister



Minister of Foreign Affairs Hon. Ali Sabry PC.

I congratulate the Russian Federation's government and people on their National Day. Our two countries' friendly relations have been strengthened over time through meetings, high-level engagements and collaboration.

Mutual respect, goodwill, and a strong sense of solidarity define our bilateral relationship. Sri Lanka and Russia have strong economic links based for trade, investment, and tourism.

In recent years, our two countries have furthered their people-to-people, cultural, technical, and educational collaboration. I am confident that the good relations between our two nations will continue to grow from strength to strength in the years to come.

Message from Dr. Saman Weerasinghe



Former Sri Lankan Ambassador to Russia and General Secretary of the Sri Lanka - Russian Society

As the Former Sri Lankan Ambassador to the Russian Federation and General Secretary of the Sri Lanka-Russia Friendship Society, I am delighted to extend my best wishes on the occasion of the Russian National Day. This significant day commemorates the historic ratification of the Declaration of Sovereignty of the Russian Federation on June 12, 1990, marking Russia's Independence from the USSR.

Throughout the years, Russia has been a steadfast ally, offering invaluable support to Sri Lanka. As the General Secretary of this esteemed society, I am dedicated to further strengthening bilateral ties between our nations. The roots of our friendship trace back to 1942 with the establishment of the Friends of the Soviet Union, which evolved into the Sri Lanka-Russia Friendship Society in 1957. Since then, the society has played a pivotal role in strengthening diplomatic relations between the two countries while standing by each other in times of need.

As a proud Russian graduate and former Sri Lankan Ambassador to the Russian Federation, I am deeply grateful for Russia's unwavering support. From fully funded scholarships for Sri Lankan youth since 1960, to providing daily meals worth \$5 million to schoolchildren through the World Food Program, Russia's contribution to education and welfare are truly commendable. Russian language courses offered across the country cater to various sectors, from tourism to academia, enriching cultural exchange and understanding.

I would also like to highlight the remarkable work of the Russian Center in Colombo, established through the strong bilateral relations between Russia and Sri Lanka. The Center's Department of Information and Education offers scholarships for Sri Lankan students to pursue courses in medicine, engineering, and various other specialties at Russian universities.

This department also provides valuable guidance to Sri Lankan students on higher education opportunities in Russia. Additionally, the Russian Language Institute offers language programs for all proficiency levels, from beginners onwards. The Department of Cultural Activities successfully showcases Russian culture, with the Russian School of Ballet and Dancing standing out as a thriving and expanding establishment. The Anatoly Karpov Chess Club and the music school further contribute significantly to the cultural landscape.

On this special day, I extend my warmest wishes to the President H.E. Mr. Vladimir Putin, Prime Minister Mr. Mikhail Mishustin, Foreign Minister Mr. Sergey Lavrov, the Russian Ambassador to Sri Lanka H.E. Mr. Levan Dzhagaryan, and all those celebrating the Russian National Day.

10th anniversary of the signing of the Eurasian Economic Union Treaty

EAEU- one of the most advanced integration associations in Eurasia



Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation A.A. Pankin

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation A.A. Pankin in an interview says that the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) is one of the most advanced integration associations in Eurasia, within which there are no customs borders between the participants, there are "four freedoms" of movement of goods, services, labour and capital, and a common internal market.

Extracts from the Interview of the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation A.A. Pankin on the 10th anniversary of the signing of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) Treaty: The Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) is one of the most advanced integration associations in Eurasia, within which there are no customs borders between the participants, there

are "four freedoms" of movement of goods, services, labour and capital, and a common internal market. Today the Union includes Russia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Armenia.

The differences between the EAEU and other regional organizations are primarily in its agenda, which is defined precisely by the Treaty on the Union, which stipulates that our association is an international organization of regional economic integration. According to the Agreement, a number of competencies of the member states have been transferred to the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) under supranational jurisdiction. This applies to foreign trade policy, customs tariff and non-tariff regulation, technical regulation and a number of other issues.

An important difference between the EAEU and other integration associations in the post-Soviet space is also the fundamental principle of consensus, on the basis of which most decisions in the Union are made. In simple terms, nothing is done without the consent of all parties, regardless of their contribution to the budget and economy of the EAEU. This, in turn, entails the ability to listen and hear each other, take into account the interests of all participants in the association and try to find compromises.

Such practices definitely benefit all EAEU member-states. From 2015 to 2023 the Union GDP grew from 1.6 to 2.4 trillion dollars, industrial production in the EAEU increased by 25.4%, agricultural production – by almost 30%. We proceed from the fact that a hypothetical rejection of Eurasian economic integration by someone would

be contrary to their interests. In 2023, the GDP of all the countries of the Union grew. The growth rate in each economy of the "five" exceeded the global one (3.2%, according to IMF estimates) and amounted to 8.7% in Armenia, 6.2% in Kyrgyzstan, 5.1% in Kazakhstan and 3.9% in Belarus.

We managed to significantly increase the volume of mutual trade with partners in the EAEU, while in 2015-2023 exports of domestic products increased by 2 times, and imports from the countries of the union – by 3 times, and about a quarter of goods in mutual trade are cars, vehicles and the equipment. At the same time, according to the latest data, the share of settlements in national currencies is about 90%. This statistic indicates that there is a demand for our products, they are competitive and occupy a certain niche in the partner markets.

It needs mentioning that the EAEU is, first of all, about people and for people. A fairly recent example: on May 2, the Agreement on Mutual Recognition of documents on academic degrees in the EAEU states came into force. This means in practice that an academic degree obtained in either country will be automatically recognized in the other. This norm will allow citizens of our countries to significantly save time and money when searching for and going to work, ease the bureaucratic burden on the educational authorities of the member states, increase the mobility of the population and open up new opportunities for them.

An even more vivid example of how the EAEU achievements apply to

ordinary citizens is related to an area of technical regulation, namely the labeling of goods. Almost every product on the Union market has the "EAC" (Eurasian Compliance) mark, which means that this product meets the quality and safety standards of the EAEU.

In addition to its impressive economic performance, the EAEU has sufficient weight in the international arena. It is one of the economic centers of Greater Eurasia. The Union has 3 Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with Vietnam, Serbia and Iran, as well as 2 non-preferential agreements with China. Relevant work has been launched on the preparation of similar documents with Egypt, Indonesia and the United Arab Emirates. Negotiations on a temporary trade agreement with Mongolia have been launched.

The EEC has signed more than 80 memoranda of understanding or cooperation with various international and regional organizations, as well as Governments of third countries from Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and the Asia-Pacific region.

Cooperation with Uzbekistan and Cuba, which received the status of an observer state at the EAEU in 2020, is being strengthened.

If we move away from official terms, I will say this: the EAEU is people. These are the people who are working to build the Eurasian economic integration, and the people for whom this is being done. And, of course, we would like the people of our countries to know and appreciate the efforts to create and improve economic processes within the framework of the EAEU.

Message from Jude Fernando



President of the Sri Lanka - Russia Business Council of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce

On behalf of the Sri Lanka - Russia Business Council (SLRBC), I extend my warmest wishes to His Excellency Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation, His Excellency Levan Dzhagaryan, Ambassador of Russia to Sri Lanka, and the citizens of the Russian Federation on the occasion of the National Day of Russia.

Established under the aegis of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce in 2001, the Sri Lanka-Russia Business Council (SLRBC) has spent over 23 years fostering the promotion of trade, investment, and tourism between Sri Lanka and Russia. Our council is dedicated to strengthening the economic and cultural bonds that unite our two great nations.

We wish to express our sincere gratitude to the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Sri Lanka and the Sri Lankan Embassy in Russia for their unwavering support and cooperation. The guidance and assistance provided by both Ambassadors have been instrumental in our efforts to enhance bilateral relations.

As we celebrate this significant day, we look forward to deepening the friendship, ties, and cooperation between Sri Lanka and Russia. We are committed to continuing our work to promote mutual prosperity and understanding for many years to come.

Sri Lanka - Russia Business Council of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce Executive Committee 2023/2024



From L – R (Seated): Ms. Shamindi Kumarasinghe, Treasurer – SLRBC, Nature's Beauty Creations, Mr. Kolitha Wickremasinghe, Immediate Past President – SLRBC, SALOTA International (Pvt) Ltd, His Excellency Levan Dzhagaryan, Ambassador, Embassy of the Russian Federation in Sri Lanka, Mr. Jude Fernando, President – SLRBC, Rhino Roofing Products Limited, Mr. Buddhapriya Ramanayake, Vice President – SLRBC, Maxims Overseas Holdings (Pvt) Ltd.

From L – R (Standing): Ms. Aneesa Boteju, Secretariat – SLRBC, The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce, Ms. Aindeenie Ramnathugala, Committee Member – SLRBC, Scanwell Logistics Colombo (Pvt) Ltd, Mr. Prabath Harshakumar, Vice President – SLRBC, Walkers Tours Limited, Mr. Buddhika Liyanage, Committee Member – SLRBC, Avian Technologies (Pvt) Ltd, Mr. Hiran Karunaratne, Committee Member – SLRBC, Regency Teas (Pvt) Ltd, Mr. Chamath Hettiarachchi, Committee Member – SLRBC, Millennium Teas (Pvt) Ltd, Mr. Samantha Pitiyage, Committee Member – SLRBC, Ceylon Fresh Teas (Pvt) Ltd, Mr. Niral Kadawatharatchie, Committee Member – SLRBC, Freight Links International (Pte) Ltd, Mr. Sunith Caldera, Committee Member – SLRBC, Unitrades (Pvt) Ltd, Mr. Lasantha Welikala, Committee Member – SLRBC, Shan Teas (Pvt) Ltd, Mr. Sethpriya Dassanayake (Not Present), Committee Member – SLRBC, HVA Foods (Pvt) Ltd.



Day of Russia



The Russian House in Colombo

RUSSIAN HIGHER EDUCATION Delegation from the Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University

On June 1, the Russian House in Colombo hosted a congress on medicine and healthcare with the legendary Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University headed by Rector Peter Glybochko. The delegation from the University arrived in Colombo to start an exclusive educational project on the basis of the Russian House.

The event was organized with the support of former Ambassador of Sri Lanka to Russia, one of the first Sri Lankan graduates of Sechenov University, Dr. Saman Weerasinghe, and President of the Association of Sri Lankan Graduates, Director of the National Hospital of Sri Lanka, Dr. Kumar Wickramasinghe.

The Meet-and Greet session brought together about 100 future applicants, parents, and Sri Lankan graduates of the famous First Medical University. Head of the Russian House, Madam Maria Popova welcomed the gathering and spoke about a huge joint project developed specifically for future students from Sri Lanka.

The congress program continued with the presentation of the First Medical University conducted by Vice-Rector Andrey Svistunov. In the course of the round table discussions, future applicants asked the university representatives many questions, showing great interest in the upcoming opening of the preparatory faculty in Colombo.

The Russian House in Colombo and the First Moscow State Medical University entered into a Cooperation Agreement – the document was signed by Head of the Russian House, Madam Maria Popova and Rector of the Sechenov University Peter Glybochko.

The solemn ceremony took place at the Russian Embassy in Sri Lanka in the presence of Russian Ambassador H.E. Levon Dzhagaryan, former Sri Lankan Ambassador to Russia Dr. Saman Weerasinghe, Vice-Rector of the Sechenov University Andrey Svistunov, CEO of the Russian House in Colombo Mr. Buddhapriya Ramanayake, and officials of the medical delegation.



ANATOLY KARPOV CHESS CLUB Annual Members' Chess Tournament of the Anatoly Karpov Chess Club

Ever since its launch in 1998, the island-famous chess club has been enjoying a huge popularity under the guidance of its all-time President and coach, Chess Olympiad Gold Medalist and 10 times Women's National Chess Champion, WFM Suneetha Wijesuriya – who has raised many champions of this intellectual sport during her impressive career.



Head of the Russian House, Madam Maria Popova emphasized the importance of chess for boosting intellect and achieving important life goals. And although this sport does not involve physical activity, it forces brain cells to move, which makes people think and calculate their steps.

Addressing the audience, the Club's President Suneetha Wijesuriya proudly announced the names of

her students who had won prestigious titles in the chess world. She also thanked the Director of the Russian House for opening a new chess class in March 2023, marking the 25th anniversary of the Club. The spacious, light-filled room is equipped with a demonstration chessboard and specialized furniture. Young chess players are attracted by the many trophies and memorable awards in beautiful display cases. The rich history of the Club is presented in photographs decorating the walls of the classroom, where more and more children eagerly come to master the game.



Opening the tournament, Maria Popova and Suneetha Wijesuriya played the first symbolic game, tightly surrounded by the young club members.

More than 80 students of the Anatoly Karpov Chess Club took part in the event as the competition was held for all age categories under the watchful eye of three international chess arbiters.

RUSSIAN SCHOOL OF ART "Peace" Vesak Lanterns Festival – Art Exhibition & Singing show



The Art School of the Russian House in Colombo hosted a magnificent Vesak Lantern Festival. This happened for the first time ever, beginning a beautiful tradition to observe important holidays, both Russian and Sri Lankan.



The area was decorated with colourful lanterns alluding to the tricolour of the Russian flag. An art exhibit with Vesak-themed paintings of our Art School students adorned the entryway to the concert hall where

our wonderful children sang beautiful songs about Vesak in English and Sinhala. Three girls from the Russian Embassy joined their friends to sing a good old Russian song "Let There Always Be Sunshine", the lyrics perfectly describing what Vesak is and proving that international friendship can easily blend our rich cultures together. It was followed by another Vesak song by the staff of the Russian House.



Moreover, the Russian Ambassador H.E. Levon Dzhagaryan, along with his spouse and Head of the Russian House Madam Maria Popova congratulated the kids by giving away the delicious ice cream treats fostering a sense of community and goodwill while reflecting the Buddhist value of Dana /charity. It truly was a celebration of unity, culture and the spirit of giving.

RUSSIAN SCHOOL OF BALLET Opening of a new Ballet studio/ Annual Ballet Examination / High Scorer Awards / Workshops

Classical ballet is the trademark and proud heritage of the rich Russian culture, being rightfully considered the best in the world. We're delighted and honoured to expand opportunities for Sri Lankan ballerinas to learn this beautiful art and improve their skills.

We officially opened a new, professionally equipped ballet studio to mark the 25th anniversary of our School of Ballet and Dancing.

It was named "The Oxana", in honour of two esteemed Russian ballerinas who made a huge contribution to the development of ballet in Sri Lanka - Oxana Karnovich and Oxana Isaeva. The opening ceremony was graced by the Russian Ambassador H.E. Levon Dzhagaryan, Head of the Russian House Maria Popova, senior diplomats, CEO Mr Buddhapriya Ramanayake, Cultural Officer Chandī Aluvihare, staff of the Russian House and our wonderful ballet instructors.



The ballet miniatures performed by the students of the Ballet and Dancing School highlighted the event, followed by the award ceremony for the high scorers of the Annual Ballet Examination 2024 conducted under the patronage of Dr. Oxana Karnovich- Senior Lecturer of the Department of Choreography and the History of Ballet at the Moscow State Academy of Choreography; Associate Professor of the Department of Vocal Art and Opera Training Moscow State Institute of Music. A.G. Schmitke; Head of the Department "Museum Apartment M.M. Plisetskaya" of the State Central Theater Museum A.A. Bakhrushin; Ph.D. in Art History and Criticism.



RUSSIAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC "Sounds of Summer" Annual Music Concert and Music Competition

The Russian School of Music has organized "Sounds of Summer," a concert showcasing the talents of our young musicians this June. The event will feature delightful, summery tunes, followed by an awards ceremony to celebrate the winners of the "Road to

Sounds of Summer" online music competition. We are preparing for this Summertastic event that promises to be a highlight of the season.



RUSSIAN LANGUAGE SCHOOL Pushkin Day

Celebrating Alexander Pushkin's 225th birthday anniversary the Russian House in the documentary film "Pushkin" from the "Myths about Birches" series was screened, after which the audience saw a video of a mini-performance based on "The Green Oak by the Seaside". The main roles in the play translated into English, were brought to life by the team of the Russian House.

Head of the Russian House Madam Maria Popova, the principal of the Russian Embassy school Svetlana Stanchina and our Russian Language teachers awarded the winners of the Pushkin Week competitions and the students with A1 level certificates. Two beautiful exhibits dedicated to the great poet, exclusively presented by a private collector as well as by the Ministry of Culture of Russia, adorned the entryway and the halls of the building, attracting visitors.



The second part of the Russian Language Day festivities shifted to the library decorated with an exhibition presented by the collector V. Belikov "Alexander Pushkin. Life and destiny. Graphics of the 19th-20th centuries".

A special guest of the event, Pakistani writer Farzana Aqib, congratulated the Russian House on this significant date, presenting eight of her books to the library fund - as a sign of respect for the glorious Russian language and international friendship.



Continuing the program, the winners of the poem contest and Russian Language teachers artistically performed the poems by Russian literary greats, appearing before the audience in Pushkin's well-recognizable outfit – the top hat, the cloak, and the cane. Opera singer Sumudu Pathiraja gave a striking performance singing "The storm covers the sky with darkness" in the form of an aria. After the concert, the guests were offered traditional Russian cuisines - Olivier salad and piroshky.

Day two of celebrating the great literary figure Pushkin was proceeded by yet another certificate awarding occasion to all the Police officers from Galle who were keen on learning Russian Language and passing the A1 Level under the guidance of Mr. Felix Fernando.





Warmest Greetings for the Russian day



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Day of Russia



SLRBC: Strengthening Bilateral Trade and Investments

RUSSIA STEADILY FOLLOWING ITS WAY FORWARD



The Sri Lanka-Russia Business Council (SLRBC) was inaugurated on 09th August 2001, on the initiative of the then Russian Ambassador in Sri Lanka, Mr. Mikhail A. Konarovskiy and then Chairman of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Chandra Jayaratne with a primary objective to function as a promoter and facilitator of bilateral trade, investments and tourism between Sri Lanka and the Russian Federation, particularly to promote exports to Russia.

The Sri Lanka-Russia Business Council aims to promote various sectors, particularly exports from Sri Lanka to Russia, by actively encouraging trade, tourism, and other services between the two nations. Recognizing the potential for growth, the council also seeks to attract Russian investments and foster joint business ventures between Russian and Sri Lankan investors.

To achieve these goals, the council emphasizes the exchange of vital information on trade and investment with relevant Russian bodies. It organizes joint meetings with Russian business organizations in both Sri Lanka and Russia, facilitating a platform for fruitful dialogue and collaboration. Moreover, the council acts as a representative of Sri Lanka's business sector, ensuring its interests are well-represented in matters concerning business relationships with Russia.

Furthermore, the SLRBC plays an active role in promoting Sri Lankan participation in trade fairs held in Russia, aiming to showcase the country's products and services to a wider audience. It also collaborates

closely with the Sri Lankan government, aligning its efforts with national objectives and strategies.

Recognizing the significance of partnerships, the council endeavors to establish strong links with Chambers of Commerce in Russia, fostering cooperation and synergy in pursuit of shared objectives. In line with its commitment, the council undertakes all necessary measures incidental or conducive to achieving its outlined goals.

With its comprehensive agenda and dedicated approach, the SLRBC is poised to contribute significantly to the growth of bilateral trade, investments, and tourism between Sri Lanka and Russia. By promoting mutually beneficial collaborations and facilitating meaningful interactions, the council aims to create a solid foundation for sustained economic cooperation and prosperity between the two nations.

How to Become a Member?

Individual persons, partnerships, companies, corporations or other organizations engaged in trade, tourism or services with Russia, or engaged in joint ventures with Russian organizations or interested in entering into or promoting trade, tourism, services or joint ventures with Russian organizations shall be eligible for membership of the Council.

For further details regarding membership of the Council, please contact the Secretariat of the Sri Lanka - Russia Business Council of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce, No. 50, Navam Mawatha, Colombo 02. E-mail: industry@chamber.lk or Tel.: 011 5588856, 5588800.

Russia is a dynamically developing country. The disintegration of the Soviet Union was followed by hard times for the people, state and economy. The terror war by extremists inspired by the Western powers was unleashed against us. Only when Mr. Vladimir Putin was elected as President, the situation began stabilizing which made possible the growth of the Russian economy and its population living standards.

Today Russia is a federative state of 89 regions - Republics (24), Krai (9), Oblasts (48), Federal Cities (3), Autonomous areas (4) and one Autonomous oblast. More than 146 mln people of 150 ethnical groups live in Russia on the vast territory of more than 17 mln sq.km. It is a secular state with Christian majority, where nevertheless the rights of all faiths' followers are secured. Throughout the centuries Muslims, Buddhists and other religions have lived peacefully with Christians. And this kind of mutually respectful coexistence will be further carefully preserved regardless the external efforts to disrupt it.

In recent years our country has launched numerous programs aimed at rebuilding economy, infrastructure and improving living standards of ordinary people. Hundred thousand kilometers of new and reconstructed roads and railways were built to ease the transition of passengers and goods. Numerous new factories are opening each year to give people jobs and produce the needed items. The intercity and internal transport including more active use of electro buses and suburban trains is also under development.

For hundreds of years the Kerch straight was an obstacle on the route from Cuban to Crimea. Now, under the Decree of the President, by the hard efforts of thousands citizens, this impediment is removed and the beautiful Crimean Bridge binds the banks of that straight, parts of one indivisible country. The peninsula that finally came back to the native harbor, has direct, solid and short connection with the South of Russia. In the Russian North you can witness powerful atomic icebreakers, which pave the way for the caravans of ships passing through the North Maritime



Route, the shortest sea route from the Northern Europe to China and North America.

20 percent of the Russian electricity generation (no breaks in supply and power shortages) is produced by nuclear power stations. Russia is an undisputable leader in this sphere, and there is no other country in the world with the same strong and reliable expertise in nuclear technologies.

The Russia's experience in space exploration is also unique. Our country is a leader in orbit launches. Our cosmonauts surf the outer space and carry out researches for future generations and improvement of everyday life. We are aimed at discovering new planets' surfaces, delivering scientists to the Moon as a part of our Lunar program.

Despite the illegal western sanctions and attempts to "cancel" Russia, our industry is steadily developing. There is a significant growth in mechanical engineering, light industry, car and tractor manufacturing and some other areas. Our opponents predicted the deficit of goods and long queues of unemployed and hungry workers but our manufacturers, on the contrary, managed to

increase production and thus ensure our food security.

We are a peaceful nation fully devoted to the international law. But Western countries, that see themselves as a globe hegemon, tend to take kindness for weakness. That's why - and also due to their colonialist nature - they unleashed a total war, a genocide against Russians with the hands of a brotherly nation - Ukraine. Blatant abominable proxy war was aimed at eradicating the Russian culture and history. We had no choice but to protect our people, our children, our borders and our state. That's why the Special Military Operation in Ukraine was launched, and it will last till the fulfilment of its goals. No doubt that we will defeat the enemy!

As it was in 90s the West wants to defeat Russia and loot our heritage. They would prefer not to see it on the map, at least that strong. But we, Russians, do need our country. And the rest of the world also does. Since it is the question of life and death, we will not allow them to implement their cruel fantasies.

Long live our Motherland - the Great Russia!
Long live our people - united and free!



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WARM WISHES TO THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF RUSSIA ON THEIR NATIONAL DAY!

On 12th June 2024





GREETINGS FROM
SRI LANKA TEA BOARD







Warmest Greetings for the Russian Day

12th June 2024



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HAPPY RUSSIA DAY

12th June

Sending you warm wishes on your Independence Day

May this day bring you peace and joy in your life!





WE EXTEND OUR WARMEST WISHES
TO THE GOVERNMENT AND
PEOPLE OF THE

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

ON THEIR
NATIONAL DAY
12TH JUNE 2024



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С Днем Рождения!

Greetings and Felicitations to the PEOPLE OF RUSSIA
on the occasion of Russian National Day
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Best Wishes

for the National Day of Russia

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SRI LANKA 2024

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HAPPY RUSSIA DAY

JUNE 12

С днём России!!



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Russia National DAY

Warm wishes to the
government and people of
Russia for their celebrations of
Russia Day 2024!



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Sipping Unity - Celebrating Russia's National Day with Ceylon Tea

By Vinoja De Silva

As Russia commemorates its National Day on June 12th each year, marked by patriotic fervor and cultural festivities, it's an opportune moment to explore the rich tapestry of relations between Russia and Ceylon tea from Sri Lanka. Amidst the grandeur of celebrations, the aroma of Ceylon tea wafts through the air, symbolizing a timeless connection between two nations separated by miles but united by a shared appreciation for the finer things in life!

Russia's Love Affair with Ceylon Tea

For decades, Russia has been a steadfast patron of Ceylon tea, savoring its exquisite flavors and aromas with gusto. From the days of the Soviet Union to the present Russian Federation, Ceylon tea has held a revered place in the hearts of Russian tea connoisseurs. The journey of Ceylon tea to Russian shores is steeped in history, with tales of barter systems and diplomatic exchanges adding to its allure.

Reflecting on the glory days when Sri Lanka reigned supreme as the foremost supplier of tea to Russia, Mr. Niraj De Mel, the esteemed Chairman of the Sri Lanka Tea Board, paints a vivid picture of a bygone era. With a wistful nostalgia, he recounts how Ceylon tea once held sway over Russian palates, its exquisite flavors cherished during the inception of the Russian Federation. Yet, as the sands of time shifted and global dynamics evolved, the landscape underwent a seismic transformation.

With over four decades of immersion in Sri Lanka's tea sector, Mr. De Mel is a living encyclopedia of the industry's evolution. From his vantage point, he articulates the journey of Ceylon tea, once a stalwart in the Russian market, to its current standing amidst shifting global dynamics.

Rewinding to the turn of the millennium, Russia emerged



Niraj De Mel
Chairman Sri Lanka Tea Board

De Mel attributed the early success garnered by Ceylon tea in Russia wholly to the Sri Lankan students who spearheaded the mission. He related how instrumental they were in networking and getting Ceylon tea across the expanses of Russia.

However, the tides of commerce are ever-changing. The advent of convenience, epitomized by the humble tea bag, ushered in a new era. India, with its mass production of tea bags, swiftly regained the throne, relegating Sri Lanka to a diminished role in the Russian market. Mr. De Mel attributes this shift not only to changing consumer

way it was manufactured, popularly known as the 100 percent orthodox manufacture, which places a heightened emphasis on rolling the tea leaves, without macerating.

Mr. De Mel further stated that Sri Lanka is such a blessed country in the sense that the diverse tea produced in Sri Lanka liquors well with waters from all around the world. He further stated that OPA liquors well with the hard waters of Russia.

Sri Lanka's tea production, while renowned for its diversity and quality, confronts the specter of declining yields, mirroring a similar trend in the Russian tea market. Despite this, the demand for tea remains steadfast, if not burgeoning, driving prices higher. Mr. De Mel elucidates how Sri Lanka's plethora of tea grades, encompassing 28 distinct varieties, poses both a boon and a challenge. While this diversity caters to varied tastes and preferences, not all tea varieties find resonance in the Russian market. Regions such as Ruhuna and Sabaragamuwa, along with high-grown Dimbulla, emerge as preferred choices for Russian consumers, underscoring the nuanced interplay between geography and taste.

Challenges and Opportunities

Despite its resilience, Sri Lanka's tea industry has faced its fair share of trials. De Mel draws attention to pivotal decisions, such as the implementation of a unified pricing system for green leaf suppliers. While intended to streamline operations, this move inadvertently compromised plucking standards, posing a threat to the industry's sustainability. Moreover, the ban on glyphosate in 2015 placed immense pressure on tea producers, disrupting established practices and necessitating adaptations to mitigate its repercussions.

As the landscape of tea consumption evolves, Sri Lanka grapples with the imperative of adaptation. While



tastes, citing Russia as a potential market for Sri Lankan green tea.

Mr. De Mel's vision for Sri Lanka's tea production resonates with a desire for growth and excellence. While acknowledging past records of success, such as the record crop of 340 kilos in 2013, he emphasizes the need for continuous improvement. With a target of increasing tea production to 300 kilos, Mr. De Mel underscores the industry's potential for expansion, urging stakeholders to strive towards realizing this goal.

Amidst the turmoil wrought by the pandemic, Sri Lanka's tea industry stood as a beacon of resilience. While other sectors faltered, the tea industry continued to thrive, contributing significantly to the country's economy. He related how against all odds the tea industry managed to bring forward USD 1.2 billion to USD 1.3 billion to finance the necessities for the country. Mr. De Mel's testament to the industry's perseverance amidst power cuts and fuel constraints underscores its unwavering commitment to weathering adversities.

With nearly five decades of experience in the tea industry, Mr. De Mel advocates for responsible agriculture and the integration of AI and robotics to enhance productivity and sustainability. He emphasizes the importance of aligning institutional strategies to ensure cohesion and synergy across the sector. Additionally, he underscores the need for strategic market targeting, identifying Japan, Europe, and the USA as lucrative markets for Ceylon tea.

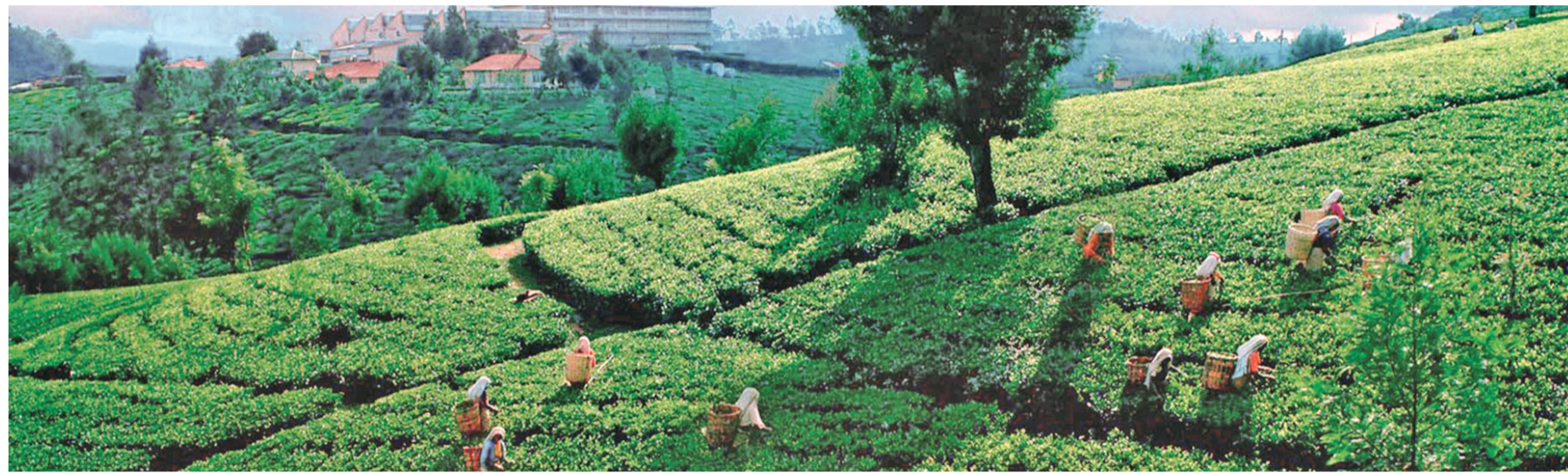
As the global tea market evolves, Sri Lanka's tea estates and production methods must adapt accordingly. Mr. De Mel acknowledges the challenge of keeping pace with rapidly changing consumer preferences and market trends, urging stakeholders to embrace innovation and flexibility to remain competitive.

A Gathering of Minds - The Sri Lanka Tea Convention 2024

Against this backdrop of transformation and adaptation, the upcoming Sri Lanka Tea Convention at the Cinnamon Grand Hotel Colombo stands as a testament to the industry's commitment to dialogue and collaboration. With a focus on pertinent issues such as climate change, this event promises to catalyze discussions and foster partnerships to steer Sri Lanka's tea industry towards a sustainable and prosperous future.

As Russians raise their cups in celebration of National Day, let us pause to savor the simple joys that unite us across borders and cultures. In the tranquil ritual of brewing and sipping Ceylon tea, we find a shared appreciation for life's fleeting moments of beauty and serenity!

In honour of the Russian National Day, let us carry forth the spirit of unity and camaraderie that binds us together. With Ceylon tea as our ambassador, we embark on a journey of cultural exchange and mutual appreciation, embracing the diversity that enriches our lives and our palates. Here's to the timeless bond between Russia and Sri Lanka, celebrated in every sip of Ceylon tea. Cheers to a future filled with shared prosperity and enduring friendship!



as a promising frontier for Ceylon tea. With a burgeoning economy and a penchant for quality beverages, the Russian populace embraced the distinct flavors of Ceylon's finest brews.

Unfolding the beginning of Ceylon tea's glorious rise in Russia, Mr. De Mel recounted the tumultuous years following the collapse of the Soviet Union, when Russia, grappling with economic upheaval, sought solace in affordable luxuries. It was during this era that Sri Lanka emerged as a beacon of hope, offering teas of unparalleled quality at competitive prices.

In a stroke of visionary brilliance, in the year 1992, the Sri Lanka Tea Board established a presence in Russia, laying the groundwork for a symbiotic relationship between Sri Lankan tea producers and Russian consumers. This endeavor bore fruit through the strategic deployment of Sri Lankan students studying in Russia. These young ambassadors, armed with a passion for their homeland's produce, served as conduits between local tea companies and Russian buyers. Their efforts bore fruit, catalyzing a monumental shift in Russia's tea consumption patterns, with Ceylon tea ascending to the zenith of preference. Mr.

preferences but also to economic realities, once recovered from its financial woes, in the post-Soviet Union era, Russia like many of its counterparts was enticed by the desire for coffee hence, the allure of Ceylon tea waned.

The Triumph of Quality

Central to Ceylon tea's ascendance in the Russian market was its unwavering commitment to quality. Mr. De Mel underscores how Sri Lankan teas, adorned with the iconic Lion Logo, became synonymous with excellence in Russia. Even amidst the rise of Russian tea trading giants Orimi Trading and May Tea Company, Sri Lanka's Lion Logo branded teas carved a niche for themselves, emblematic of the discerning Russian consumer's quest for unparalleled taste and refinement.

One of the hallmarks of Ceylon tea is its diversity, with a myriad of grades and flavors to suit every palate. From the verdant hills of Dimbulla to the lush valleys of Ruhuna, each region lends its unique charm to Ceylon tea, captivating discerning tea enthusiasts around the globe. For instance, OPA tea grade in particular is a Russian favorite. The OPA yields its unparalleled taste from the

traditional markets like Russia retain a fondness for Ceylon's orthodox teas, the rise of tea bags presents a formidable challenge. Mr. de Mel acknowledges the need for diversification, advocating for increased production to meet evolving consumer demands. Moreover, he aptly notes, that Sri Lanka must target high-value markets to reclaim its position as a leading tea exporter.

Central to Sri Lanka's quest to reclaim a larger share of the Russian market is a focus on quality, and innovation. Mr. De Mel emphasizes the importance of increasing tea production to meet burgeoning demand, while also addressing the pressing need to mitigate production costs. Sri Lanka's tea industry, grappling with labour shortages and rising costs, must embrace mechanization and modernization to remain competitive on the global stage, as Sri Lanka contends with formidable competitors such as India and Kenya, whose low production costs pose a formidable challenge.

As consumer preferences evolve, Sri Lanka's tea industry faces the challenge of catering to the demand for green and herbal teas. Mr. De Mel acknowledges the need for innovation and diversification to meet these changing

The Russian House in Colombo..

Continued From page 18

CHARITY

International Charity Bazaar / Donations and entertainment at the Indira Cancer Trust / Donations to the De Mel Park Children's Care Centre

One of the brightest highlights of December has become our participation in the annual International Christmas Charity Bazaar-2023 at Galle Face. Spreading the joy together with all the diplomatic missions of the island, the Russia stall won the 'Best Country' award for the first time in 12 years, meeting all the five listed categories!

Along with traditional souvenirs, we were also presented by our Russian School of Ballet and Dancing and our wonderful Art School, entertaining kids while their parents



pleasure to do something good, maybe not very big, but good - for the children of Sri Lanka."



RUSSIAN STATE SCHOLARSHIPS

The scholarship campaign for the 2023-24 academic year has officially reached its final and most poignant stage, and our birds are preparing to leave the nest. Scholarships are gifted annually from Russia for the interested students around the island making their higher education dream come true with a promising standard.

These determined and passionate young people have made the best choice in their lives by choosing to study in Russia. While we shake their hands and wish them luck in the adventure as we restlessly repeat that Russian higher education is the seal of quality.



RUSSIAN CULTURE

Russian Language and Cultural Festival at the Galle Face Hotel

We had a very eventful and successful Russian language cultural day at the Galle Face hotel celebrating Russia and its rich aesthetic importance.



enjoyed the Christmas shopping. The Russian Embassy in Sri Lanka took part in setting up the fairytale backdrop. Needless to say, our handcrafted ornaments by Russian artisans brought especially for the occasion, won all hearts and were sold out the moment they hit the stand!

The Russian House in Colombo continues its collaboration with the Indira Cancer Trust, Sri Lanka's largest cancer research and healthcare center. Recently, the Russian House made a charity donation for children's cancer medications, raised during the International Christmas Bazaar. Madam Maria Popova of the Russian

said that her team came to bring a little happiness and share a piece of their hearts - a little something for education, for any kinds of things that the children might need. Children always need something - they grow up, it's just natural.

"We are very happy that we can do something to help the children of Sri Lanka because our two countries - Russia and Sri Lanka, have always been very friendly, they have supported each other in every way. And as the representation of the Russian Federation, it is our special